

February 5, 1957

Mr. Millard Susman
4 Ladue Crest Lane
St. Louis Cy. 17, Mo.

Dear Mr. Susman:

Your applications for fellowship support, and supporting documents, have been received and are under earnest consideration. Since you mentioned microbial genetics as your special interest, these papers have been referred to me for custody meanwhile.

You don't have to be reminded that you have an unusual record of performance in undergraduate study. With the ability that these credentials imply, you should be welcomed at any of a number of graduate schools. You should not waste such an opportunity: you ought to define your aims as clearly as you can now, and then choose the particular schools where you can best realize them.

On the other hand, high undergraduate achievement has not always gone hand in hand with superlative graduate and research performance. For this, imagination, motivation, perspective, stability are as important as intellectual acuity.

Your application was somewhat vague as to the area of your greatest interests. Perhaps this has not differentiated yet. I am very much interested in your application, and would like to encourage you to a more detailed discussion of your career aims. How much do you know of microbial genetics to make a sound basis for your prospective interest? Have you that enough about it to have any ideas as to the sort of research problem you might like to undertake? I might as well tell you bluntly that we have very little here by way of formal instruction —e.g. just one 2 or 3-hour course in such a specialty as microbial genetics— our main training effort is in the actual conduct of cooperative research, students and professor working as intimately as possible. By the time a student has reached graduate school, most of his further learning ought to be self-taught, and my main function is to furnish research facilities and general guidance. However, the university has many didactic resources in the nearby subjects of biochemistry, microbiology, etc., to help a student enrich his background.

Meanwhile, I am forwarding your application for a WARF assistantship to the appropriate committee. If (as would surprise me) this fails, I still have under advisement your general application, to which an award might be made from project funds. I would look forward to hearing more from you as a basis for this decision, and for the important question whether my own laboratory is the best place for you to go. [I should add that 1/2-time research assistantships will pay \$1920 p/a; the WARF appointments probably slightly more.]

Yours sincerely,